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ABSTRACT

Studies have shown that members of the working class are often overworked, underpaid, overtaxed, and unhappy. They tend to be distrustful of new ideas and methods and to rely on their extended families to meet their needs for human contact. One way in which the working class person may have a chance to widen the character of his interactions with society may be through cable television. In order to achieve this breakthrough the communication system must be manned and sustained by persons of ostensible working status backgrounds and interests, thereby giving the cable system credence among its proposed audience and a voice to speak to the outside world. With this system established it may be possible to give working class people a view of the larger world, an understanding of the society in which they live, and a guide to the power they possess to shape society to their needs. The proposed system may also offer simple pleasure-giving entertainment that is better geared to the unique popular culture tastes of working people. (JY)

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# The Neglected Majority:

# Mass Communications and the Working Person

By

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March, 1971

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Work, and your house shall be duly fed:

Work, and rest shall be won;

I hold that a man had better be dead

Than alive when his work is done.

Alice Cary

An Obscured Majority

A fascinating though unpublicized 1965 study of "happiness" among 2006 male residents of four Illinois communities documented two commonly-held observations: namely, that happiness is (1) a resultant of a complex mix of personally-derived satisfactions and dissatisfactions and (2) that differences in the manifestation of happiness can be attributed to differences in the social positions that individuals hold.

In these regards, Reports on Happiness[6] observes the following:

> ...there is a strong positive correlation between happiness and both education and income, a marked negative correlation between happiness and age, and no difference in reported happiness between men and women. While these findings are not exactly new, their importance needs to be emphasized because they contradict some generally held notions--that women, for example, tend to be unhappier than men or that money brings unhappiness. (p. 10)

Examining Table 1 reproduced from this study we note in the authors' words that, "at every level of education making more money is associated with being happier, but having more education is not always related to being happier."

Table 1. Education, Income, and Happiness (Per Cent "Not Too Happy")

| Education | Less than $3,000 | $3,000-$4,999 | $5,000-$6,999 | $7,000 or more |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 8th grade or less | 33 (359)* | 13 (115) | 13 (97) | 3 (32) |
| High School or part high school | 27 (142) | 16 (213) | 10 (284) | 7 (227) |
| Part college or more | 21 (29) | 9 (53) | 7 (107) | 10 (188) |
| Total Number | | | 2,006 | |

*Numbers in parentheses in this table represent case base upon which percentages are based.

Persons earning the least amount of money and simultaneously being encumbered by the lowest amount of educational achievement, not surprisingly, are most likely to experience unhappiness. In general we note a positive correlation between educational achievement and happiness among persons earning less than $7,000 annually. However, this relationship is inversed among those earning more, where persons who are relatively better off both financially and educationally are the most likely to express unhappiness. Of considerable interest is the finding that persons with the lowest educational status combined with the highest income status are the least likely to be unhappy. Here, the authors of the report suggest that having achieved a status well beyond what might ordinarily have been expected accounts for these persons expressing the relatively high degree of positive feelings that they do.

When the interrelationships among income, educational achievement, and age are analyzed in light of their effects upon feelings of happiness we find that unhappiness is most apparent among those who are oldest, the least educated, and the least affluent. The study further observes:

> Among the better educated, low-income respondents, age is related to unhappiness. In this group those who are under forty are happier than those who are forty or over, although there appears to be little relation between age and happiness after forty.
>
> ...Income makes little difference in reported happiness among younger respondents, but a considerable difference among respondents forty or older. This finding suggests that present income has different meanings at different stages of the life cycle. For younger people, who presumably have not yet reached their full earning power, expectations of future income are more important than present income. The more serious effect of low income on people forty or older, who have reached their full earning power, is apparent in the considerably higher proportion of respondents in this group who report that they are 'not too happy.' Among the poor it might be said that 'life ends at forty.' (p. 12)

From the data reported to this point we see that certain sub-groups in the population-- who perhaps can be described variously as "working people" or "low socio-economic status people" or "blue-collar" persons— generally show a higher degree of personal dissatisfaction (i.e. unhappiness) than do other sub-groups - particularly if they are older. The significance of these findings for the problems to which this paper is addressed will be established in due time. For now, let us look at some additional data from the study that merit attention.

Happiness, the Report contends, is directly related to the amount and intensity of personal concerns or "worries" that the individual experiences. Consequently as the amount and intensity of worry increases, happiness decreases.

Further, the study notes that the contents of personal worries varies with age and, most importantly, with socio-economic status (S.E.S.)

A glance at Table 2 reproduced from the study is revealing:

Table 2. Socio-Economic Status, Age, and Worries*
(Per Cent Worrying "Often")

| Worries | Socio-Economic Status | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | High | | Low | |
| | Age | | Age | |
| | Younger Than 50 | 50 or Older | Younger Than 50 | 50 or Older |
| Growing old | 4 | 12 | 4 | 21 |
| Death | 4 | 7 | 5 | 14 |
| Health | 8 | 14 | 19 | 39 |
| A-bomb or fallout | 2 | 4 | 4 | 8 |
| Getting ahead | 39 | 24 | 46 | 24 |
| Money | 52 | 43 | 51 | 41 |
| Personal enemies | 13 | 9 | 8 | 6 |
| Work | 58 | 55 | 54 | 39 |
| Marriage | 17 | 8 | 12 | 4 |
| Bringing up children | 55 | 18 | 46 | 14 |
| Number | 612 | 227 | 450 | 547 |
| | Total | 2,006 | | |

*Respondents were divided into two social classes. "High" consists of people who have at least two of the following attributes: family income of $5,000 or more, high school graduate or more, and white collar occupation. "Low" consists of those with none or only one of the above attributes.

Among higher S. E. S. persons younger persons are concerned (in rank order) primarily with (1) work, (2) child-rearing, (3) money, and (4) getting ahead. In contrast their lower S. E. S. counterparts worry mainly about (1) work, (2) money, (3) getting ahead, and child-rearing. Note that for lower S. E. S. younger persons money takes on secondary importance while it is ranked third in order of concern within the upper S. E. S. group.

In comparing the frequency of specific worries among younger individuals in the high and low S. E. S. sub-groups, we note that concern about personal health is far more visible among low S. E. S. persons by a margin of 19% to 8%; that compared to 55% of the younger persons in the high S. E. S. bracket, 46% of the younger men occupying lower S. E. S. statuses worry about the upbringing of children; and that younger lower S. E. S. individuals are more frequently concerned than are their higher S. E. S. fellows about getting ahead by a margin of 46% to 39%.

In short it appears that when the content of worries that are expressed by younger people occupying higher and lower socio-economic statuses are compared, lower S. E. S. younger people are far more frequently pre-occupied with their own personal capacities to "make it" economically than are younger individuals in the higher S. E. S.

categories. "Making it" in our society, for most of us, is directly related to being able to earn enough money through work.

For upper S.E.S. persons who are older the rank ordering of personal worries are as follows: (1) work, (2) money, (3) getting ahead, and (4) bringing up children. Here with a minor change or two older higher S.E.S. people appear to share high priority worries that are similar to their younger counterparts. But note the relative frequency distributions of these worries.

Compared to younger people of upper socio-economic status, older people in the same S.E.S. category are much more apt to worry about aging, death, personal health, and nuclear war. By considerable margins they are far less likely to be concerned about getting ahead, money, marriage, and child-rearing. What appears to be happening here (as well as in the lower S.E.S. bracket) is older persons worry more frequently about those inevitable and uncontrollable aspects of life that are not amenable to their own personal influence. In contrast younger persons are most likely to concern themselves about those matters over which they can direct some personal control, at least theoretically.

Within the lower S.E.S. category, older individuals worry about (1) money, (2) work and health, (3) and getting ahead in that rank order of frequency.

By wide margins, as compared to younger low S.E.S. people,

individuals who are older and are positioned in the lower S.E.S. category are more likely to worry about growing old, death, health, getting ahead, and nuclear war. On a proportionate basis they are far less apt to be concerned about getting ahead, money, work, marriage, and child-rearing--in, by now, a familiar patterning of worry priorities.

Let us look at a comparison of older persons in both the upper and lower S.E.S. brackets.

As compared to their high S.E.S. correspondents, older people of lower socio-economic status are considerably more apt to worry about growing old (21% to 12%); are more likely to worry about their health (39% to 14%) and the approach of death (14% to 7%). Similarly, they worry more often about nuclear war (8% to 4%). In short they just worry more. To be older and relatively less affluent is to worry more.

Of significance is the fact that higher S.E.S. persons aged 50 and over are far more frequently worried about work (55%) than are their lower S.E.S. counterparts (39%). For the more affluent older person continuity in work is a source of concern; for his less affluent fellow the release from work no doubt represents a pleasurable anticipation.

These findings should be kept in mind. Shortly, we shall see

that two important organizing thematic principles which distinguish the life styles of working people from those of other sub-populations in America are (1) an almost pervasive anxiety about the lack of ability to control the "outside world" and (2) dissatisfaction with work and drudgery combined with a desire for dissociation from work as an integral aspect of a total life pattern.

Sociological studies such as Reports on Happiness are simultaneously both revealing and exasperating. Time and time again we note social research studies which uncover differences of significance between and among sub-groups in the American population on a wide range of attitudes, opinions, life-styles, tastes, and behaviors. Most often these sub-groups are classified according to "demographic" descriptions such as sex, age, race, education level, occupation of head-of-household, and annual gross family income. When differences between and among the three latter classifications appear, ordinarily they are attributed to variations in "socio-economic status" or to "social class." All of us are familiar with findings that distinguish, for example, between upper and lower social class values; between the behavior patterns of individuals in "professional, technical, and kindred" occupations as compared to those who are "operatives and kindred workers;" between the aesthetic tastes of persons in the "upper-upper" social class and those who are classified as being positioned in

the "lower-middle" social class; and between the life-styles of "white-collar" workers and those whose collars may be "blue" while on the job.

Very pertinent to the problem this paper attempts to investigate is the realization that gross demographic classifications of populations often result in superimposing heterogeniety onto sub-groups which in fact share commonalities outside the realm of demographics; in over-looking important, though at times, small variations, shadings and nuances; in substituting interpretations and analyses for what is mere description. Yet, because sociological data are ordinarily analyzed and interpreted on the basis of demographic variations, we are forced to do likewise, despite our misgivings.

The first major mass communications problem that arises here can be best exemplified by an aphorism: Gross demographic classifications of audiences lead to gross cliches about audience behavior. No student of mass communications can long remain unfamiliar with "principles" such as these:

1. The better-educated are more likely to prefer print media; the least-well educated prefer audio-visual media.
2. Higher-income persons are more likely than lower-income persons to be exposed to more different media of communication more often.

3. Professionals and managers are more apt to use the media for serious purposes, while working people are more likely to use them for frivolous entertainment.
4. The lower the socio-economic status of the audience, the less critical is it apt to be of the medium, particularly if the medium in question is "non-educational" television.
5. The more educated the audience is the more likely is it to be exposed to educational television programming.

What is exasperating about such derived "principles" is that on one level they reflect some element of reality--but on another plane their predictive power as such is not altogether certain. Thus, many college-educated high-income persons spend inordinate amounts of time viewing commercial television "entertainment" fare, while large numbers of their less-well educated and financed counterparts eschew such activity. Not all lower S.E.S. viewers are uncritical of commercial TV. As a matter of fact, lower S.E.S. viewers appear to fault commercial TV for its alleged emphasis on "sex" and "violence" more often than do more affluent audiences.[14] A number of studies have indicated that, first, many less-well educated people do view educational TV programming and second, that much of educational TV content is not geared to the interests of less well-educated audiences, thereby giving them no special reasons for tuning in.

Perhaps even more important a shortcoming of the strictly demographic approach to discerning sub-populations is its tendency to obscure major sub-populations which share many bonds of commonality other than gross demographic attributes such as education, occupation and income alone. Identifying precisely who comprises the "working class" in contemporary American society represents a most pertinent case in point. Indeed, even the precise delineation of who works and who does not is somewhat ambiguous. Here, again we must rely on governmental census definitions which consider individuals to be "in the labor force" if (1) they have held a job during a specific week or if (2) they reported that they looked for a job during that same week. Persons falling within the first category are considered to be employed, while those in the second group are treated as being unemployed or "out of work." A third category used in government reports includes individuals who are able to work, but do not seek employment for one reason or another (e.g. housewives). Such persons ordinarily are labeled, "not in labor force, other reasons." It is clear that given these kinds of operational definitions, the determination of who is employed and who is not, at best, is rather speculative. A similar circumstance holds true when we attempt to ascertain the specific jobs at which employed persons actually work. Here the 36,000 different specific jobs that occupy individuals in our modern complex technological society are compressed into eleven discrete major categories:

1. Professional, technical, and kindred (e.g., accountants, engineers, teachers, physicians, nurses)
2. Farmers and farm managers
3. Managers, officials, and proprietors
4. Clerical and kindred (e.g., bookkeepers, clerks, and typists)
5. Sales
6. Crafts, foremen and kindred (e.g., carpenters, mechanics, electricians)
7. Operatives and kindred workers (e.g., truck drivers, semi-skilled factory workers)
8. Private household workers
9. Service workers, except private household (e.g., janitors, barbers, police, cooks, beauticians)
10. Farm laborers and foremen
11. Laborers

Much of the confusion that arises from this particular classification scheme stems from the fact that these ascriptions connote educational status and the prestige that the job-holder may enjoy in his community along with some implicit reference to the occupational tasks he may actually be required to perform.

The ultimate consequences of the way we customarily designate employment and jobs is that we tend both to underestimate and to obscure a major segment of our society who for want of a more precise set of criteria can be designated as "working people."

This state of affairs has prompted Sebastian de Grazia to observe:[7]

> Today, with all the presumed improvements in methods of social investigation and research, the workers somehow defy detection and examination. In public opinion polls they are usually underestimated; in political studies they vanish into apathy; in sociological studies they prefer silence or evasion, leaving the stage to others more practiced in reading and writing. Like the slaves of antiquity, workers stay in the shadow of the public realm. (p. 49)

Were "workers" to comprise an insignificant proportion of the population, we might be able to live with a certain amount of miscalculation. The fact of the matter, however, is that "workers" and "workingmen families" make up an actual majority of the American society--no matter what criteria are used to identify them.

For the purposes of this paper let us designate workers operationally as being those persons who are regularly employed in either manual occupations or in occupations that call for routine task performance and which do not entail much abstract thinking in order to be accomplished. According to the U.S. Census such persons would be employed as clerical workers, sales workers, craftsmen and foremen, operatives, non-farm laborers, private household workers, non-household service workers, and farm workers. Although the jobs held by individuals in these categories vary, there are shared attributes among these people that reflect a higher degree of homogeniety than is readily apparent. For example, these workers are

reimbursed in hourly wages rather than in annual salaries. The job tasks they are required to perform do not require a college education. Their annual earnings rarely extend beyond the national median, and more often than not, fall below the median. Advancement in job careers is generally limited with promotions coming at very infrequent intervals, if at all over relatively lengthly periods of employment. Finally, they tend to concentrate in and around large urban centers.

Additionally these workers share a wide range of common norms, values, attitudes, tastes, and life styles which is clearly distinctive and which offers a considerable rationale for treating these sub-populations as one particular type of social aggregate or sub-culture.

At this point it might be important to review briefly some pertinent dimensions of the working sub-culture in the United States--at least from an orthodox demographic perspective.*

In 1967, the total U.S. labor force, comprised of persons aged sixteen and over, was estimated to be 74 million in number. Of this total, 8 million (11%) were non-white, and 27 million (36%) were female.

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*Unless otherwise indicated demographic data are taken from the U.S. Bureau of the Census's Statistical Abstract of the United States: 1968 (89th Edition) Washington, D.C., 1968.

Fully 95% of the labor force was employed in non-agricultural jobs, with the remainder working in farm-related jobs. More than 3.5 million (5%) of all those employed worked at more than one job.

Important to note is the fact that more than three-fourths of the employed people in this country, comprising no less than 57 million persons, function as working people in one way or another.

Consider the following figures as they pertain to the occupational distribution of the contemporary labor force which numbers 74,372,000.

... 13,884,000 persons or 19% of the total labor force work as operatives (e.g., truck drivers, semi-skilled factory workers)

... 12,330,000 or 17% are employed in clerical jobs (e.g., typists, clerks, bookkeepers).

... 9,845,000 or 13% work as foremen or in crafts jobs (e.g. mechanics, carpenters, electricians).

... 7,566,000 or 10% are employed in service work other than that performed in private households (e.g., janitors, barbers, cooks, police).

... 4,525,000 or 6% work in sales jobs.

... 3,533,000 or 5% are employed as non-farm laborers.

... 3,554,000 or 5% are employed in farm work.

... 1,769,000 or 2% are private household workers.

In all 19,181,000 employed persons or 23% of the total labor force belonged to a trade union in 1966. Among all persons employed in non-agricultural jobs in 1966, 28% held memberships in trade unions. Not to be overlooked is the substantial presence of women in the labor force. Totally, some 27 million females are employed in the United States. Of these, two-thirds or 18,000,000 are married.

In their distribution by jobs, 79% of the employed females can be classified as working women. Of the 27 million women in the labor force then

... 8,928,000 or 33% are clerical workers

... 4,255,000 or 16% work in other than household services

... 4,178,000 or 15.5% are operatives

... 1,904,000 or 7% are sales people

... 1,737,000 or 7% work at household services jobs

Other than serving as important sociological data per se, gross as they may, these figures are of singular interest to the student of mass communications. Here, it is immediately apparent that there exists a majority sub-group in the population which no doubt possesses distinctive mass communications needs. The questions remain; what are these distinctive needs, and how are the mass media serving such needs?

Before we put the matter of pure demography aside, let us consider several additional facts.

In 1966 the estimated median income for all full-time employed persons was $6,856.

... For clerical and kindred workers median income that year was $6,542

... For sales workers in the retail trade it was $6,150

... For craftsmen, foremen, and kindred workers the median was $7,161

... For operatives and kindred workers it was $6,135

... For service workers other than household workers the median was $5,117

... For household service workers it was $5,210

... For farm laborers $2,576 represented the 1966 median income

... For laborers other than farming and mining workers it was $5,133.

Working people's earnings generally fall below par vis-a-vis persons in higher status occupational groupings. No wonder that concerns about money and earning capacity play such important roles in the experiences of higher frequencies of "unhappiness" we have seen expressed by lower S.E.S. individuals.

Education is the ticket to better jobs and higher incomes in America, as the following figures suggest:

Table 3. Lifetime Mean Income in 1966 by all Males Aged 25 Years and Older

| Schooling Completed | Average Lifetime Income |
|---|---|
| Less than 8 years | $ 3,520 |
| Eight years | 4,867 |
| Some high school | 6,924 |
| High school graduate | 7,494 |
| Some college | 8,783 |
| College graduate and beyond | 11,739 |

Put another way, employable individuals who have no more than an elementary school education are destined to a lifetime of earnings that are well-below the national median. In 1967, there were approximately 31 million Americans aged 25 and older who had not progressed beyond grammar school. (See Table 4).

Persons with some high school exposure or those who have completed a high school education pretty much reflect the national median income over a lifetime of working. By far the largest single bloc of persons aged 25 years or older in 1967--approximately 50 million in number--fall into this category.

Those individuals who have been exposed to a college education or who have received a college degree are practically guaranteed a lifetime earnings average which exceeds the national median substantially. Yet, this sub-group comprises the smallest number of individuals--some 20 million in all.

All things considered, we are basically a nation of high school attendees who, for the most part, are cut out for a lifetime of pursuing workingmen's jobs and relatively low incomes.

Table 4. Median Years of School Completed in 1967 for all Persons Aged 25 Years and Older (99,438,000).

| | |
|---|---|
| Less than 5 years | 6.1% |
| 5-7 years | 10.2 |
| 8 years | 14.8 |
| High School: | |
| 1-3 years | 17.8 |
| 4 years | 31.6 |
| College: | |
| 1-3 years | 9.5 |
| 4 years or more | 10.1 |
| Median School Years Completed in toto | 12.0 |

Although it is evident that there is a powerful positive correlation between educational achievement and lifetime earnings, it is equally evident that this correlation, for a variety of reasons, is not reflected as a strong driving motivational force among workingmen families.

In this regard let us note the data that S. M. Miller presents.[26]

> We lack adequate information on the educational experience of working-class youth in the United States. The best estimate we have is that at present one-third of the youths of all social classes will never finish high school. Conflicting national data would place the percentage of dropouts in the working class as between 35 per cent and 55 per cent. If we take 40 per cent as a low working-class

> droupout rate, then of the 60 per cent who do graduate from high school, no more than 30 per cent go on to college. (About half of all high school graduates begin college.) The working-class college-going rate is lower than 50 per cent, so that 30 per cent is a high estimate. Thus, of all working-class youth, perhaps one-fifth (the range of estimates would be between three-tenths and one-sixth) will have some college. The class differences in percentage who graduate from college is undoubtedly greater, because working-class youth are more likely than middle-class youth to leave college without the diploma. The 20 per cent figure is a third of the over-all middle-class rate of college attendance. I hasten to add that these estimates may have very large errors in them, and that I believe the percentages of working-class college-goers to be too high. (p. 123)

Miller continues by pointing out that to the workingman's children, the prospect of actually "breaking out" from this status via the educational route is considerably more remote than it is for the offspring of middle and upper-class families.

The author presents the following data in developing an argument that realistic necessity rather than subjective choice operates to force workingmen's offspring into poorer jobs in at least 25% of the cases who graduate from high school. (Table 5)

Table 5. Occupational Distribution of Employed Male High School Graduates 16 to 24, Not Enrolled in College, Graduated Prior to 1958, In October, 1959.

| Major Occupational Group | All Noncollege Attendees | Nonwhite* | Estimate of Working-Class Sons (Average of (1) and (2) |
|---|---|---|---|
| Professional, technical | 6.4% | 3.4% | 4.9% |
| Managerial | 5.0 | - | 2.5 |
| Clerical, etc. | 12.7 | 15.5 | 14.1 |
| Sales worker | 5.7 | 1.7 | 3.7 |
| Craftsmen, etc. | 20.2 | 11.2 | 15.7 |
| Operators, etc. | 27.8 | 19.0 | 23.4 |
| Service Workers, etc. | 5.5 | 17.2 | 11.3 |
| Farmers, etc. | 6.1 | 3.4 | 4.8 |
| Laborers, etc. | 10.5 | 28.5 | 18.5 |

*Includes college graduates.

Source: Sophia Cooper, "Employment of June 1959 High School Graduates, October, 1959," U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Special Labor Force Reports No. 5, May, 1960 (also in Monthly Labor Review, May, 1960). Adapted from Table C.

Among the factors that inhibit the mobility of workingmen's offspring are those relating to the need for contributing to the family's income at relatively younger ages (thereby forcing high-schoolers to take any "first" job that happens to come along), the fact that poor "entry" jobs are usually "dead-end" leading to no or relatively minor steps upward in terms of career; the instability of employment (i.e., layoffs), forcing workers to change to other jobs of equal or less opportunity frequently; the relative short periods of time it takes working people to hit their maximum job "ceilings" with no hope of long-range continuing "advancement."

Eventually, these circumstances operate to lock in the workingsmen's offspring into what many observers refer to as the "stable working class." Other observers have referred to the same phenomenon as the "American working caste system."

Perhaps "caste" is too strong an ascription, but if we glance at data relating to father-son occupational status we will note why some observers are moved to use so trenchant a phrase. (Table 6)

Table 6. Current Occupation by Father's Occupation, Noninstitutional Male Population 25 to 64 Years Old, United States (Month of March, 1962)

| Father's Occupation | Current Occupation Percent Total White Collar (Professional, Managerial, Sales, Clerical) |
|---|---|
| Professional | 70 |
| Managerial | 67 |
| Sales | 66 |
| Clerical | 58 |
| Skilled workers, foremen, etc. | 39 |
| Semiskilled | 32 |
| Service (including private household) | 37 |
| Laborers (excluding mine and farm) | 24 |
| Farmers and farm managers | 23 |
| Farm laborers | 14 |

Source: Bureau of the Census, Current Population Reports, "Lifetime Occupational Mobility of Adult Males, March, 1962" (Washington, D.C., May 12, 1964). Based on a study conducted by Peter M. Blau and Otis D. Duncan.

Where the range for sons of professionals, managers, salespeople, and clerical personnel holding similar jobs roughly lies between six and seven out of ten, note the precipitous drop to three to four out of ten as it applies to sons of skilled, semiskilled, and service worker fathers who wind up in so-called "better" white-collar jobs. Still further, a significant drop is observed in the proportions of sons of laborers and farm workers who eventually occupy white-collar positions. In terms of upward mobility for working peoples' offspring, it appears to be a prospect that is narrow and limited in scope. Breaking into the "better" more prestigious middle and upper occupations is a meaningful alternative for only a minority of workingmen's sons. For most, they no doubt will continue to follow in the paths of their working-status fathers.

Overworked, Underpaid, and Overtaxed

By way of review we have uncovered a majority sub-population in America which has remained obscured principally by the requisites of demographic classification. In gross terms this sub-population works at routine jobs that require no more than a secondary-school education--jobs that are unstable, limited in opportunity, and which pay relatively low wages. We have seen that persons in this particular population cohort tend to be relatively less upwardly mobile both educationally and occupationally. At the same time we have observed that lower-income working people manifest relatively higher frequencies of personal worries and unhappiness.

Exploring beyond these relatively more apparent attributes into the less manifest realms of working peoples' values, attitudes, tastes and life styles, one is struckwith a single oft-repeated and overriding fact; namely, the utter feelings of boredom, anxiety, dissatisfaction, distrust and defeatism that characterize working people's orientations to their jobs as well as to large areas of life generally. "In the working class," R. S. Weiss and David Riesman sum up, "jobs are often so unsatisfactory that there is no social pressure to say one enjoys one's work; it is socially permitted to regard it with dislike or at best detachment." [34](p. 582)

Limited chances for advancement, low pay, drab surroundings,

repetitious performance of routine tasks all contribute to feelings of job dissatisfaction. Perhaps more importantly than anything else, however, is the prevailing notion that in the general scheme of things holding down a worker's job stands for very little in a society which places the highest premiums on such upper and middle class "virtues" as getting ahead, achievement, success, and in modern jargon--"making it big." Realizing that he has neither gotten very far in the past nor that there is a strong likelihood for him doing so in the future, the working man (along with his family) is well aware of his "locked-in" inferior social status. This awareness generates a "muffled resentment" towards all those who have been "lucky" enough to escape the workingman's fate.

This syndrome manifests itself in a variety of interesting ways.

The feelings of detachment from one's work result in a compartmentalization of "the job" as simply a burdensome means towards other more satisfying life ends. These life goals relate to being able to cope "on the job" to the degree that it does not become overwhelmingly obnoxious. Getting away from the job through shorter work weeks, temporary leisure activities, and ultimate early retirement (or for females--through marriage and child-rearing) make up meaningful pursuits for significant numbers of working people.

The build-up of "muffled resentment" to which Weiss and

Riesman refer goes a long way towards establishing a tenaciously "we-they" orientation to life generally, and towards the so-called upper, middle and poor classes specifically. Resentment directed towards the upper and middle class power-wielders is expressed in terms of avoidance, suspicion, and distrust, privately expressed derision, and small-scale sabotage.

De Grazia's observations are pertinent here:[7]

> In the factory an underground life is lived under the noses of foremen, supervisors and time-study men. They may smell it but they find it hard to see or touch. The workers live in a world apart, on its negative side slow, restrictive, inimical to supervisors, management, and other outsiders; on its positive side inventive, ingenious, and loyal to co-workers. (p. 50)

Towards the unemployed poor who threaten either to cut into or take away what little workingmen have managed to acquire and hold on to, resentment takes on much more open and direct expressiveness in terms of hostility, confrontation, and even violence.

The muffled resentment syndrome makes for a peculiar form of turning inwards that results not so much in a political "class consciousness" but rather into what S. M. Miller and Frank Riessman term a "person-centered" orientation.[27] Here institutions, bureaucracies, abstract ideas, issues, political platforms, and economic and social programs are considered to be irrelevant, difficult to understand, harmful, and barriers to normal social intercourse. Good guys--people--are capable of transcending such remote phenomena. You "make a deal;"

you "find out for yourself from a guy who really knows what he's talking about;" you "go see a guy who can fix it;" you "fool around and have a good time;" you "size the guy up and then decide what you will do."

Contrariwise, you "take care of the s.o.b.'s" who make up the "thems" rather than the "us's." You "don't give 'em the time of day;" you "give 'em a taste of their own medicine;" you tell them to "shove it;" you "fix their wagon;" you "take a walk;" you "knock a few heads together."

After reviewing an extensive literature on the "working-class sub-culture" ("working class" defined as being comprised of "regular members of the non-agricultural force in manual occupations"), Miller and Riesmann concluded that six characteristic themes delineate the working people's sub-culture:

The themes are:

1. Stability and security
2. Traditionalism
3. Intensity
4. Person-centeredness (discussed above)
5. Pragmatism and anti-intellectualism
6. Excitement

Prefacing the detailed discussions of these specific themes is the authors' general overview of the contemporary American worker's organizing thematic system:

> He is traditional, 'old-fashioned,' somewhat religious, and patriarchal. The worker likes discipline, structure, order, organization and directive, definite (strong) leadership, although he does not see such strong leadership in opposition to human, warm, informal, personal qualities. Despite the inadequacy of his education, he is able to build abstractions, but he does so in a slow physical fashion. He reads ineffectively, is poorly informed in many areas and is often quite suggestible, although interestingly enough he is frequently suspicious of "talk" and "new fangled" ideas.
>
> He is family centered; most of his relationships take place around the large extended, fairly cooperative family. Cooperation and mutual aid are his most important characteristics.
>
> While desiring a good standard of living, he is not attracted to the middle-class style of life with its accompanying concern for status and prestige. He is not class conscious although aware of class differences. While he is radical on certain economic issues, he is quite illiberal on numerous matters, particularly civil liberties and foreign policy.
>
> The outstanding weakness of the worker is lack of education. Strongly desiring education for his children, he shows considerable concern about their school work, although he feels estranged from many institutions in our society. This alienation is expressed in a ready willingness to believe in the corruptness of leaders and a general negative feeling toward 'big shots.'
>
> He is stubborn in his ways, concerned with strength and ruggedness, interested in mechanics, materialistic, superstitious, holds an 'eye for an eye' psychology, and is largely uninterested in politics. (pp. 28-29)

Working people's dissatisfaction with "the job," among other things, stems in the main from the realistic fear that holding on to it for uninterrupted life-long periods of time is never guaranteed. Plant shut-downs and relocations, strikes, displacements caused by automation and other technological innovations, and economic recessions and industrial declines all serve to put the working person on life-long

notice that extended periods of potential unemployment await him on almost a week-to-week basis. The concerns arising from living in an unstable economic environment in turn causes considerable worry about money, thrift, and being able to "put something away for a rainy day." The concerns about job stability experienced by working men spill over into the arenas of family relations. Threats of lengthy periods of unemployment spell possible family disorganization that may end up in the ultimate dissolution of the nuclear unit through separation and divorce. For the man of the house the prospect of his job suddenly evaporating raises fundamental questions about his personal masculinity and his status in the community. As hedges against the nagging possibility of job loss he attempts to develop relationships of a mutual co-operative helping nature within his relatively small circles of co-workers, friends, neighbors, and extended family. The world beyond this peer-group "community" is at one time both feared and distrusted.

With regard to money matters he concerns himself (through his wife) with the thrifty handling of the family's finances, and he shies away from getting too deeply into debt by avoiding expenditures on non-essential "luxuries" and by making "credit" purchases only when "necessities" are involved.

The pressures upon the working man's sense of security that are generated by job instability are shared equally by his spouse. In

this regard Rainwater, Coleman, and Handel, who studied 480 workingman's wives in Chicago, Louisville, Trenton, and Tacoma, write as follows:[28]

> The working class wife's outlook is shaded by a fairly pervasive anxiety over possible fundamental deprivations. She is anxious about her physical safety, stability of affection, dependable income ...She knows the threat of curtailed income, the loss of dependable funds for necessities through layoffs, strikes, reductions in the hours of work. These are things she knows <u>may</u> happen. They may come upon her with no advance warning, the result of larger forces which she has little ability to influence or control. (p. 46)
> ...working class women as a group are not confident that their economic futures hold promise of improvement. They are more pessimistic than otherwise over their families' financial futures, They neither have confidence in their husbands' increasing skills, nor are they optimistic about the general state of the economy. They fear that the future 'won't be any better than the present--and it might get worse.' (p. 148)

Recall that "getting ahead" was more frequently expressed as a worry by younger lower socio-economic status men as compared to younger higher S.E.S. men in the <u>Reports on Happiness</u> study. No doubt "getting ahead" within the context of perceived long-term job instability is indeed considerably more difficult and irksome a prospect for working people than it is for the middle and upper class groups. "Getting by" rather than "getting ahead" is perhaps the more important a life-goal for the working person. Although getting ahead is source of considerable concern for (especially younger) working people, its possible realization for workers in terms of progressive advancement towards optimal self-fulfillment--so predominant a middle and upper

class value--is overshadowed by the realities of economic insecurity. Consequently the notion of "getting ahead" for the working person is translated into relatively small and narrow steps forward rather than gigantic leaps. The assembly line worker aspires to becoming a foreman; the bank clerical worker wishes to be a teller; the telephone operator hopes to be a supervisor some day; the clerk-typist aspires to the status of secretary. Moving into these minor advanced jobs not only spells additional income, but even more importantly, the security associated with these "better" jobs is perceived to represent something of a buffer against a precipitous lay-off. Parenthetically, simply acquiring a better (i.e.; college) education per se is not seen as helping workers overcome apprehensions relating to job security mainly because they have difficulty ascertaining any direct connection between them. As the study with which this paper opens observes, "...having more education is not always related to being happier."

If working people spend considerable energy in striving for security and stability it is unlikely that they will welcome change and innovation for their own sakes. . . In a world fraught with the threats of imminent disaster, it can be expected that whatever equilibrium is established, precarious as it may be, will be clung to most tenaciously in the face of pressures to change. Changes imposed by a world over which working people believe they have very little, if any, control are

translated into additional dangers to their sense of stability, harmony, and balance. Rather than running the risk of disaster by adopting innovations readily, the working person finds it considerably less meancing simply to resist change.

Although they are concentrated in the cities, contemporary American working people exhibit values, attitudes and ways of life that are more reminiscent of simple village societies than they are of complex modern urbanized life. So ingrained are the traditional ways among contemporary working people that Herbert Gans refers to workers as the "urban villagers."

In addition to high resistance to change traditionalism among working people manifests itself in a pervasive distrust of institutions, concomitant with a heavy reliance on face-to-face primary and peer group relationships; in tightly-knit family orientations; in sex-segregated activity; and in moral codes that are arranged in rather strongly dichotomous explicit categories of good-vs.-evil.

At the base of the working man's societal structure is the extended family or family circle that includes grandparents, siblings, uncles and aunts, and cousins in addition to the nuclear unit consisting of parents and offspring.

Observes Gans:[11]

> Perhaps the most important--or at least the most visible--difference between the classes is one of family structure. The working-class subculture is distinguished by the dominant role of the family circle. Its way of life is based on social relationships amidst relatives. The working class views the world from the family circle, and considers everything outside it as either a means to its maintenance or to its destruction. But while the outside world is to be used for the benefit of this circle, it is faced with detachment and even hostility in most other respects. Whenever feasible, then, work is sought within establishments connected to the family circle. When this is not possible--and it rarely is--work is primarily a means of obtaining income to maintain life amidst a considerable degree of poverty, and, thereafter, a means of maximizing the pleasures of life within the family circle.
>
> ...The specific characteristics of the family circle may differ widely--from the collateral peer group form of the West Enders (Italian-American workers in Boston), to the hierarchical type of the Irish, or to the classic three-generation extended family. Friends may also be included in the circle, as in the West Enders' peer group society. What matters most--and distinguishes this subculture from others--is that there be a family circle which is wider than the nuclear family, and that all of the opportunities, temptations, and pressures of the larger society be evaluated in terms of how they affect the ongoing way of life that has been built around this circle. (Parenthesis inserted) (pp. 244-245)

While the working man's family is male oriented (i.e. patriarchal) maintenance of the home and the upbringing of children falls predominantly within the responsibility sphere of the wife. It is from and within her family that the workingman's wife finds both her raison d'etre and her sense of fulfillment. The family offers her emotional succorance as well as anchorage in a world that she often may find to be otherwise confusing and ever-menacing.

The data gathered by Rainwater, Coleman, and Handel point out the importance of traditional family ties to working people's wives.[28]

> The working class wife's daily routine is centered upon the tasks of home-making, child-rearing, and husband-servicing. (p. 26)
>
> ...The working class wife and mother lives her life closely tied to the day-to-day experiences within the family, and her children and husband occupy her energies and emotions, her inner life and her routine behaviors much more extensively than is true for the middle class woman...It is within the family, then, that she must achieve whatever gratification her world offers her, and it is on the basis of her feelings about her family, and her conjectures over how her actions will affect them that she makes her decisions, whether these be to go or not to go to the doctor, to buy this brand or that, vote for the school bond issue or not, to go to the movies or read a magazine. Similarly, her response to the persuasive appeals of advertising, public relations or political platforms has its origin in the feelings, attitudes and strivings which stem from her life within the family, and from her feelings about what is appropriate or gratifying or permissible for her as her husband's wife, her children's mother. (p. 102)

As is true of most tradition-bound societies, activities within the workingman's family are divided along sex lines, with tasks and activities being distributed on a man-woman basis. For the most part men are expected to be the breadwinners and women, the home-tenders. Workingmen's informal and leisure relationships are predominantly male-oriented ("going out drinking with the boys"), while women in working families pretty much confine themselves to relating to other women ("having the girls over for a card game"). In those relatively rare instances when cross-sex events do occur (e.g. family Christmas dinner) a high degree of awkwardness and restraint is in evidence .

until the men eventually go off by themselves in the kitchen to "down a few" and the women are left to themselves in the living room to "gab and talk women's talk".

The moral perspectives of working people appear to operate within the tradiational "eye-for-an-eye" context of meting out swift direct punishment to "serious" offenders without regard for the extenuating circumstances that may be involved. Offenses against moral codes are committed because some men are inherently evil, not because social institutions have failed them. Perceived evil-doers are to be punished severely rather than rehabilitated.

Punishment (usually in physical form) is considered a proper technique for achieving discipline and order. Thus, it is not uncommon for physical punishment to be used routinely in the rearing of working-family children. Individuals are considered to be totally responsible for their behavior, and punishment is viewed simply as the proper consequence for acts that show a shirking of individual responsibility. Inflicting punishment upon offenders is considered to be a deterrent by way of setting examples for others who may be tempted to transgress.

The research done by Robert Endelman posits a corollary to this basic theme.[9] Endelman found that working people tend to be highly punitive towards violations perpetrated by others, but are considerably more tolerant of violations they themselves commit.

The researcher concludes that for the working person "the crime is not in doing it, but in getting caught... the capacity not to face moral implications of one's own transgressions is combined with punitiveness toward others who commit similar or even more trivial offenses, but who are known, exposed--'caught'". (pp. 310 and 312)

What tolerance is shown towards moral infringements by others is reserved for people who are close to the subject (i.e. friends, relatives). Here we find less an orientation to a universalistic abstract sense of justice and more of a particularistic person-centered situational approach where "other" people who are "caught" probably deserve punisment, while the subject himself, his relatives, and friends are to be forgiven for occasional "mistakes".

The overall profile of the working man perspective on morality emerges from Endelman's work along these lines:

> ...He admits to a few youthful transgressions and fewer adult ones, of a minor nature, in a way that hints at more that has been concealed. What he does tell about--such as siphoning gas out of other people's cars in his late adolescence--is rationalized by any combination of the common 'techniques of neutralization'--'everyone was doing it'; 'I needed it more than they did'; 'I didn't realize it was wrong,' and so forth. For lack of opportunity, his adult violations have not included any elaborate or large-scale income-tax evasions, but one guesses they would have had he had the chance. With respect to ambiguous moral situations, he leaves it to outside forces to determine the rightness or wrongness of certain lines of conduct, especially if he can define something as only part of his job: '<u>They</u> say to do this, so it must be all right.' Conversely, if someone else got into trouble for doing that, it must be wrong. He might take a chance on a shady deal in real estate if he can be convinced that it's within the law; or he might refuse to go along

> for expedient reasons--too much danger. If he declined to go himself, and disapproved his friend doing so, he would not make it a principled point to expose his friend: let someone else, whose job it is, get the evidence on him--though he micht also not go so far as to lie under oath to protect his friend. Much would depend on the expediencies of the situation.
>
> ...In his own childhood, he was often brutally beaten by his bully father, without principle or gradation. He tells about this in a matter-of-fact, almost affectless way; then adds, 'I'm glad my father was so strict: see, I didn't go wrong.' Delinquency he suggests, would be less today if all children were so treated. If he caught his own teen-age son stealing, he's 'beat hell out of him.' He is greatly concerned about current sexual violations: the worst offense he judges to be rape. His concern about rape is less about the violation of the girl than about a more generalized feeling of atrocity about sex; alternatively, the most terrible voluntary act if narcotics (no sharp line between user and pusher). He is outraged that 'they lose all control--it takes over.' Prodded to the user-pusher distinction, he waxes almost apopletic about the pushers, thinks they should be punished to the limit--the death penalty, even. He has no hesitation about the death penalty--for that, or for rape, or for murder--and readily invokes lex talionis: an eye for an eye. (p. 314)

Traditionalism in morality among working people is particularly evident in areas relating to sexual propriety. Early marriage and motherhood are considered the only legitimate goals for girls. Thus, heavy emphasis is placed on traditional virtues of pre-marital virginity and post-marital faithfulness--at least as they apply to females. Males are exempted from strict sexual moral codes to the degree that occasional transgressions are to be tolerated provided they harm neither "nice" girls nor threaten family stability. Wives of workingmen will tolerate a certain amount of extra-marital sexual activity on the part of their spouses primarily because they are overwhelmingly dependent

upon their husbands in order to maintain their own identity, status, and self-fulfillment. However, when extra-marital sexual transgressions *become frequent, submissive "forgetting* and forgiving" no longer represent viable reaction modes, and the dreaded break-up of the marriage looms as the ultimate reality.

The sexual morality codes of the working person's sub-culture place heavy stress on the traditional rewards to be granted to "the nice girl," "the faithful wife," and to "the good husband"; and simultaneously, traditional punishments are to be meted out to the "girl who carries on like a tramp," "to the skirt-chaser," and to the husband who openly "fools around with a lot of women."

Admitting to the elusive nature of this concept, Miller and Riessman point to a quality (they refer to it as "intensity") of working people's life style that suggests tendencies to exhibit highly emotional reactions to a variety of events, institutions, ideas and people. Working people's low-boiling points with regard to temper; their tendencies to act first and think later; their stubborness and tenaciousness with regard to their traditional "core" beliefs that relate to superstitions, religion, diet, sex, loyalty, education, and bureaucracy all have been chronicled more aptly by novelists and playwrights such as Arthur Miller, James Farrell, Tennessee Williams, John Updike and Clifford Odets than they have been by social scientists. Certainly there is ample

reason to suspect that working people are more likely than middle or upper class persons to manifest affective or emotional responses to common situations than they are to reflect so-called rational, or deferred responses. This immediate, affective response style acts to shut off working people from intellectual flexibility (what Milton Rokeach calls "closed-mindedness") making them relatively less open to "logical" argumentation and so-called "reasonableness" as a consequence. The work of Carl Hovland and his Yale University associates on persuasibility has demonstrated that immunity to persuasive communications is a function of positioning in the lower socio-economic statuses. By virtue of their relatively lower educational achievement levels, their orientation to traditionalism, and their strong anchorages in primary peer groups, it is not surprising that working people hold on to their ways in a manner that is equally stubborn, unquestioning, and manifestly intense. Getting through to them with innovative ideas encased in "logic" alone presents a nearly insurmountable challenge under these circumstances.

> With workers, it is the end-result of action rather than the planning of action or the preoccupation with means that counts. An action that goes astray is not liked for itself; it has to achieve the goal intended to be satisfactory. It is results that pay off. While this orientation has an anti-intellectual dimension, it does somewhat reduce the reliance on personality (person-centered theme) by its emphasis on results. Workers like the specific action, the clear action, the understood results. What can be seen and felt is more likely to be real and true in the workers' perspectives, which are therefore likely to be limited. The pragmatic orientation of workers does not encourage them to see abstract ideas as useful. (Miller, Riessman. p. 3)

Within such a value context it is easy to see that intellectuality as such ranks very low in the workingman's scheme of things. To a degree perhaps the working person tends to denigrate intellectualism as a defense against his own educational shortcomings. As Miller and Riessman indicate further what probably is at work here more importantly are deeply imbedded perceptions (based on a good deal of reality) that acquiring more education per se is not always visibly linked to direct benefits.

We have seen that the working person puts more faith in learning from experince and from people than he does in "learning from books." Although he may have adopted the notion that education per se may be of some utility at some future time, and that he may "respect" education for its own sake, he sees the educated sub-groups in our society generally as operating in the amorphous arenas of abstractions, theories, and speculations which do not lead to "practical" resolutions of difficult problems, and indeed, may often result in harmful consequences. What respect working people have for "brains" is reserved for ability per se. But the working person is convinced that overall, "thinkers are not doers." Eventually, the "doing" most certainly must always fall upon the shoulders of the non-intellectual--workers. The writings of the popular longshoreman--philosopher Eric Hoffer underlines and reinforces these sentiments strongly with his basic pronouncement

that power in the hands of intellectuals is corrupting, exploitative, and generally harmful to society.

Born, reared, and living in environments that are relatively tradition-bound and unstimulating, it is not too surprising that the seeking of stimulation from outside the person (i.e. excitement) is a modal behavior pattern among working people.

Encumbered by the unattractiveness of both the job and home, "excitement" is pursued by working people via their informal interpersonal relationships, their leisure-time activities, and their consumer behavior. Here researchers have found that gossiping, sports, TV viewing, reading the "comics," and "confession" magazines and the purchase of gadgets and goods (particularly "major" commodities such as automobiles, color TV sets, and home laundry euqipment) tend to alleviate the general humdrum quality of working-persons' lives.

If the working person's "job" offers little surcease from routine dullness--a dullness that is interrupted only by temporary "coffee breaks," informal chats with co-workers, and "horseplay"--the home-husband-child oriented working man's spouce finds herself in a similarly unstimulating grinding situation:

> The 'daily routine' of a working class wife typically includes only two activities beyond the big three of house, children, and husband. These 'other two' activities are TV watching and neighbor or relative visiting. However, 'casual visiting' as a daily activity is not mentioned by a majority of these women. Television, in contrast, ranks very high in their devotion...Very few of these women, however, work in any TV time until the evening when

> they are able to sit down in front of the set with either their husbands or children. Occasionally a young housewife mentions that her family takes daily car rides in the evening, or that she chauffers the children to a nearby swimming pool in the summer. But such adventures beyond the realm of homemaking or TV watching are distinct exceptions. (Rainwater, Coleman, Handel, p. 30)

Moving away from the humdrum in acceptable ways via "legitimate" means--narrow as they may be--is translated into exciting experiences in their own right by "respectable" working people. The poignant aspect of this is that here even the pursuit of excitement becomes routine in itself.

For those working people (particularly the youth) who are not too concerned with the maintenance of a "respectable" community image, the pursuit of excitement or "action" often manifests itself in behaving in socially unacceptable or even criminal ways.

Underpinning this cursory thematic profile of the worker subculture are pervasive sentiments about a world lying beyond their tradition-bound peer-group communities that is manipulative, confusing, and frightening. This "outside world" overworks the working man for its own benefit mostly. It underpays him for the work he performs; for the boredom he endures; and for the anxieties he must suffer from its unstable nature. On top of all this the outside world overtaxes him for services he rarely sees as benefitting him directly; for abstract social and economic "programs" he considers to be "impractical"; for innovations that upset his traditional ways; and for the mistakes that

"intellectuals" rather than hard-nosed practical men like himself have made.

Generally, the working person sees himself as an "outsider"--an alien in his own land--who, when the chips are down, has to make it on his own and in his own way somehow. Middle-class guidelines set down by the "outside world" leave him cold. These guidelines for the most part tend to be abstract and universalistic, while he is particularistic and pragmatic; they tend to stress delay, patience, and long-term deferrment, while the working person places emphasis on the immediate; they tend to focus on the rational, whereas the working man's style calls for affective responses; they tend to stress achievement, while the working person is concerned primarily with survival.

Question. To what degree are the mass media (particularly television) to which working people turn with ostensible enthusiasm reflecting these sentiments in a manner that offer these patrons insight, guidance, and psychological support?

Unfortunately, due to a lack of available data, the question cannot be answered either directly or fully. We must approach it obliquely in the hope that we may begin to generate a partial answer at least. We begin with observations relating to the mass media attitudes, tastes, and behaviors of working people as defined primarily by their demographic attributes.

The Neglected Majority

The apparent love affair that has been going on now for two decades between commercial television and working people audiences has been well-documented by researchers such as Bogart, Steiner, Glick and Levy, Gans, Hodges, and Rainwater, Coleman, and Handel.

In a phrase we can say that as compared to others, working people spend more time watching (commercial) television and appear to be more satisfied with what commercial TV has to offer.

Data from a nation-wide survey of the adult population conducted by Mendelsohn in 1968 corroborate the previous findings on viewing time spent [23]:

Table 7. Frequency of Viewing Television by Education, Occupation of Household Head, and Income

| | Number | Light Viewers--Less Than 4 Hrs. Daily | Moderate Viewers--4-Less Than 5 Hrs. Daily | Heavy Viewers 5 Or More Hrs. Daily |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Education: | | | | |
| Grade school | 728 | 35% | 28% | 37% |
| High school | 1692 | 35 | 32 | 33 |
| College | 723 | 52 | 26 | 22 |
| Occupation of Household Head: | | | | |
| Professional or Business | 650 | 51% | 24% | 24% |
| Clerical or Sales | 357 | 42 | 37 | 21 |
| Blue-collar Workers | 1413 | 37 | 30 | 33 |
| Farmers | 212 | 36 | 34 | 29 |
| Non-labor force | 474 | 24 | 31 | 44 |
| Income: | | | | |
| Under $5,000 | 812 | 35% | 28% | 37% |
| $5,00-$9,999 | 1476 | 35 | 32 | 33 |
| $10,000 and over | 807 | 49 | 28 | 23 |
| Total | 3148 | 39% | 30% | 31% |

Similarly, a nation-wide study conducted by Lieberman Research, Inc., in 1966[18] reaffirmed the observation that overall favorable disposition towards commercial TV programming increases as income decreases. In other words the more money one earns the more critical of commercial television's offerings is he apt to be. (Unfavorable criticisms were voiced by 48% in the $10,000 and over bracket as compared to 33% earning $5,000-$9,000 and 23% with incomes below $5,000).

Various reasons for the affinity that working people show vis-a-vis commercial television have been offered. Geiger and Sokol[13]

suggest for instance that (1) there is simply less creative recreational activity going on in working class homes (Wilensky refers to this as "low-leisure-competence"); (2) that the smaller physical space allotted to working class households forces everyone to view when one member turns on the set; (3) that TV provides a relatively inexpensive diversion. (A 1970 survey of movie attendance conducted by Opinion Research Corporation shows that where 73% of persons earning $15,000 and over annually and 68% of those in the $10,000-$14,999 income bracket paid for admissions to a movie during a given six-month period; 62% of those earning $7,000-$9,999; 56% of those earning $5,000-$6,999 and only 33% of those with incomes below $5,000 did likewise.) and (4) that middle and upper class families tend to hold TV viewing as a questionable and "unconstructive" way to spend leisure time, thereby depressing the total times these families spend with television.

Whatever is responsible for the bent that workingmen's families manifest towards commercial television, it is evident that as compared to persons in middle and upper statuses they are considerably more dependent upon the medium for a variety of functions. In this regard the Mendelsohn study cited previously found that where two-thirds of persons who can be described as "workers" proclaimed that they simply "could not manage without TV," only 42% of so-called upper-white collar personnel and professionals responded in a similar vein.

Additionally the same study indicates that:

- Where 60% of the working people sampled claim they depended "a lot" upon TV for pleasure and relaxation, 46% of those in more prestigious statuses do so similarly.

- Where 13% of the working sub-population report a high dependency on TV for religious satisfaction and comfort, no more than 5% of the persons in higher statuses do so.

- Where 19% among working people respondents say they depend on TV heavily for non-news instrumental information nearly half that proportion (10%) among upper status subgroups indicate the same degree of dependency.

Important to note here is that we are not discussing the role of non-school related "educational" TV or more correctly--public television--in the lives of working people.

In this regard, a national survey conducted in 1970 by Louis Harris and Associates for the Corporation for Public Broadcasting--Viewers of Public Television - 1970 [15] reports that within the six months preceeding the survey fully 61% of the sample who had less than a completed high school education had never viewed any public TV (in areas where PTV was available). This is in sharp contrast to the 44% among high school graduates and the 25% among college

graduates who reported no exposure at all to similar fare.

Note the following data relating viewership of PTV to income during the six-month period preceeding the Harris interviews:

- Among persons earning less than $5,000, 59% said they never tuned in.
- 52% of all those earning $5,000-$9,999 reported that they never viewed PTV.
- In the $10,000-$19,999 bracket the percentage reporting no PTV viewing at all was 43.
- Among the most affluent ($15,000 and over), 30% revealed that they had not watched any public television at all.

Unfortunately the Harris report contains no tabulations by occupation. Nevertheless, if we extrapolate from the data on audience income and education we can infer that working people tend to watch public television in substantially smaller proportions than do their higher status neighbors. Further, we have some reason to believe from these data that PTV probably plays far less a significant role within the framework of working people's mass communications needs than does commercial television.

Harris' data on the sheer physical availability of PTV is of particular interest. Availability is hampered by factors of geography

mostly, but the necessity for owning a UHF receiver in order to receive PTV signals in 43% of the areas now being served by public television presents an additional barrier.

Although totally broadcast PTV is not available to 29% of the households in the U.S.A. it is not available to 41% of the households that are located in towns of less than 50,000, while 55% of all households in rural areas have no access to PTV that uses the air waves. Similarly, persons earning less than $10,000 annually are least apt to have access to PTV by the following margins: by 36% for those earnings less than $5,000 and by 30% for those earning between $5,000 and $9,999 as compared to 23% among those in $10,000 and over category who do not have access to a public television service.

In areas where public television is available only on UHF (i.e. to 43% of all households) a full 42% of these respondents reported that their TV sets were unable to receive the UHF signal. Households in rural areas (75%); that were headed by persons who had not completed high school (51%); and whose family incomes were under $5,000 (57%) are particularly hard-hit in being unable to have purchased recent UHF-equipped models (i.e. 1964 and later models).

The upshot of all this is that proportionately large segments of the American population--particularly segments which appear to be comprised of working people who reside in smaller industrial and

agricultural locales--are denied access to broadcast public TV principally by virtue of geography and economic inability. Here the potentiality of cable TV services for overcoming these access problems is self-evident. If viewing public television by working people is a function of sheer physical access, cable certainly affords a significant way out of this particular dilemma. But non-availability alone appears to be a relatively weak barrier.

Additional data from the Harris report as well as from a number of previous studies reenforce the observation that public television's orientation is fundamentally elitist and that the "serious" abstract, "cultural", "artistic", and "educational" tones of a good part of its offerings simply by-pass the needs, interests, and tastes of the "obscured majority" we have described in the first section of this paper. As far as broadcast PTV is concerned the obscured majority becomes the "Neglected Majority."

In its inception the elitist thrust of "educational" TV was a source of unmitigated pride, as witnessed in this statement appearing in the volume by Wilbur Schramm, and his associates, The People Look at Educational Television:

> The regular ETV audience is only a minority of all the television audience.
>
> ...In every respect except size, the audience for educational television is the kind broadcasters dream about--the best-educated, most articulate, best informed, most upward mobile, culturally and civically most active persons in the community. (p. 90)

Perhaps so long as "educational" television relied upon the financial support of private foundations as well as that of affluent private patrons, there was some justification for ETV to address itself almost exclusively to the needs (mostly needs of convenience) of the relatively small upper-white collar professional, college-educated minority. Even so it is inconceivable that a service supposedly dedicated to "education" could ignore the facts that only a fifth of the population aged 25 and older have had some college exposure; that a mere third have completed high school; and that slightly less than half have had less than twelve years of schooling.

Additionally one fails to see the justification for an almost exclusively elitist television service in light of the fact that on a proportionate basis there are almost as many persons in the 25 and older age cohort who have had less than eight years of schooling (16%) as there are those with some college exposure (20%).

The Public Broadcasting Act of 1967 essentially removed the private support base for "educational" television and in its stead created a publicly financed (through taxes) "public" television service. If the past elitist orientation of educational TV was distasteful continuing such a course on the part of public television today is intolerable. Yet, the 1970 Harris study shows that public television continues to attract middle and upper status audiences in far greater proportions

than it does working people.

Although there are problems relating to accessibility to PTV, the essential rub in this regard is that working-class people perceive public television fare to be too intellectual, too high brow, too abstract and obtuse, and too remote from their own peer world as well as from their unique needs to warrant their attendance. Consequently, what was considered as a matter of success in the past now proves to be a source of considerable consternation. On this point, the Harris study observes:

> The only sharpness in public television's image is one that we believe is unfortunate. It is (still) considered elitist... educational, and appealing more to those with an above average education.
>
> Encouraging this elitist image, but also a measure of its potential strength, is the fact that attitudes towards public television become more positive with increasing education, while attitudes toward commercial television become more negative.

Although there are many means by which working people can find out about the world and through which they can experience temporary pleasure and diversion, commercial television fare rather than print materials is turned to most frequently as research that has been conducted by Bogart, Gans, Mendelsohn, Roper and Steiner has concluded.

As but one illustration note the data that were obtained by Mendelsohn in 1967 in his study, Public and Academic Library Usage in the United States.[22]

This study reports that fully 76% of the grade school-educated adults surveyed nationally indicated that they had not read a book during the three-month period prior to the interviews. In contrast 41% of the high-school educated group in the sample, and 21% among those with some college education reported similarly. At the same time nine out of every ten persons whose educations terminated in elementary school revealed they had not visited a public library in the three-month period before the survey took place. This figure is in sharp contradistinction to the 69% among those with a high school education and the 44% among the college educated respondents who reported no public library visits during the preceeding quarter year. The Neglected Majority thus is equally overlooked by our public libraries as it is by our public television services.

The reasons for this neglect no doubt are manifold. Yet one cannot help but think that much of it stems from a lack of understanding on the part of middle class providers of communications services of some of the fundamental thematic threads that continue to weave through the fabric of the working people's sub-culture.

Ancillary "educational" services like public television and libraries are typically repositories of middle and upper class values and tastes. Also, they are typically established and manned by middle class personnel, and in being so are regarded as yet another part of

that strange, abstract, bureaucratic, demanding, unexciting, impractical "outside world" that working people find to be generally discomforting and of little practical use.

We have already noted how working people disdain "education" as a means for improving their personal lives. Before submitting themselves to communications that are purely of educational, cultural or artistic merit then, the working person must first be convinced that he will benefit in some explicitly direct and immediate fashion from it. The notion of ars est longa, vita brevis is totally alien to him. To acquire knowledge, to enjoy literature, painting and live drama for their own sakes appear to be silly, wasteful, and meaningless to the working person. Consequently, trying to foist uplifting "serious" or "educational" communications fare upon the working person will not automatically stimulate voluntary exploration on his part. To the contrary, forced feeding of serious stuff will more likely produce resentment, and reenforcement of the stubborn traditional anti-intellectual streak that is already so important a manifestation of the workingmen's orientation to the "outside world."

Those of us who wish to communicate effectively with the working people of America must make ourselves meticuously aware of the unique mass communications taste patterns that mark this particular sub-culture. Here the work of Herbert Gans takes on particular importance. Gans submits the proposition that a variety of "taste cultures" whose "values are standards of taste or aesthetics"

operate simultaneously in our society and often within patterns of similarities that together make up "the total array of art, entertainment, leisure, and related consumer products available in the society." Gans has identified six separate taste cultures that find their bases in various socio-economic strata of America. His "Lower Culture" sub-type is of the greatest interest here, primarily because it simultaneously accomodates and reflects the largest single public--a public that is comprised of working people mostly.

The hallmark of this lower taste culture is its basically anti-intellectual posture. "Like the lower-middle culture public," comments Gans, "this one also rejects 'culture,' but it does so with more hostility. It finds culture not only dull but also effeminate, immoral and sacrilegious; it supports vigorously church and police efforts at censorship." (p. 591)

The cultural tastes of working people place nearly all emphasis on substance--the story, the plot, the recognizable content of the picture, the melody. Form receives no notice whatever. Consequently, working people have virtually no contact with high art where form often takes precedence over substance.

The "person centered" orientations of working people color their cultural tastes as well. Not only do workers place emphasis on the substance of cultural offerings, but they also focus upon the

performers--the stars--who are considered to be paramount above all, including the creators of these offerings. Emphasis upon the performer--rather than upon the creator of the fare or for that matter, the performance itself is manifested in the identifications with "stars" that crop up through such collective behavioral manifestations (particularly among the young) as "fans," "followings," "fan clubs," "groupies," and the like. Here working people audiences expect to relate to performers as "real" people despite the variegated roles that these performers may assume--in a process that sociologists term, "para-social interaction." Even though the images projected by "personalities" in the popular arts and sports are mostly contrived, working class fans expect their favorites to "live-up" to their projected reflections consistently just as though they were true. When this does not always materialize, "fans" express deep-felt disbelief, disappointment, and ultimate disenchantment. What appeals profoundly to working class audiences, Gans finds, are presentations wherein traditional values of morality, loyalty, love of family, religiosity, and individual responsibility are dramatized and are protected from and ultimately triumph over evil, sin, temptation, and unbridled impulse. The author elaborates:

> The culture's dominant values are not only expressed... but also dramatized and sensationalyzed with strong emphasis on demarcating good and evil. The drama is melodramatic, and its world is divided clearly into heroes and villains, with the former always winning out eventually over the latter. (p. 59)

Because, as we have seen, the world of working people is rigidly sex-segregated in its social life-style, it is not surprising that the "popular culture" tastes and behaviors of workers are similarly dichotomized. Here Herbert Gans notes that, "there are male and female types of content, rarely shared by both sexes... Familial drama that deals sympathetically with the problems of both sexes at once is rare." The author continues:

> Sexual segregation and working class values are well expressed in the Hollywood 'action' film and television program, and in the confession magazine, the stable of male and female lower culture respectively. The action film insists on a rigid distinction between hero and villain; the only social problems that are explicitly considered are crime and related violations of the moral order. (p. 591)

In these "action" presentations what appeals to working class men are explicitly drawn hero types who possess such highly valued workingman characteristics as overt masculinity, practicality, resentment towards and distrust of institutionalized authority and bureaucracy, and reticence in non-sexual relationships with women. Heroes who are "loners"--the private eye, the cowboy, for example--who function either on their own or with the help and support of a few close dependable friends or relatives enjoy particular acceptability on the part of male worker audiences. Thus, the themes of person-centeredness, traditional morality, anti-intellectualism, excitement, and muffled resentment directed towards the outside world--so evident among the

workingman's sub-culture at large are seen to play critical roles in his preferences for popular culture fare. Commercial TV and Hollywood-style films appear to fill these apparent needs to some degree for the working status male.

That workingmen's popular media tastes run towards melodramatic "action" fare has been confirmed by a recent study of television preferences that was conducted by John Robinson of the University of Michigan's Survey Research Center. Analyzing the TV viewing "diaries" of some 10,000 persons, Robinson found that the male audiences for most "violent" television programming were drawn disproportionately from among lower S.E.S. populations.

For the women in the workingman's world popular culture tastes appear to be bent towards the day-time "soap opera" and the "confession" and "romance" magazine genres wherein conflicts between the need to be "sexually responsive to be popular with men and remaining virginal until marriage" (Gans-p. 592) represent the more or less standard fare for consumption.

Studies of the readership of confession and romance magazines like True Story indicate that more than three-fourths of the women who patronize them can be classified as members of working people households. Further it has been noted by Rainwater, Coleman, and Handel that readers of confession and romance types of magazines rarely read more "serious" magazines or, for that matter, more middle

or upper status "women's" magazines. These authors report that, "it has been estimated that over two-thirds of the working class housewives who read any magazines at all, read one of the 'romance' or family behavior types." (p. 126) According to Rainwater, Coleman, and Handel readers of True Story are attracted to it primarily for its ostensible sexual content. But here the interest rather than being of a prurient nature is instead mainly instrumental in its origins. In this regard the three researchers conclude that for True Story's working status female readers the magazine's contents "do not deal primarily with sex, but are concerned with a range of topics of importance and human interest."

Readers of True Story type magazines as well as "soap opera" fans more often than not find a good deal of support for their own values and beliefs within the fiction that is presented. In addition these forms of working status literature afford female audiences a substantial amount of intrumental information relating to coping with everyday life problems that they missed during their own experiences with a limited formal education. Through exposure to this fare, working women pick up "tips" that teach them "what they should do" when they are faced with problems ranging from "summer romances" through preparing "Meat Loaf a la Roquefort," to caring for a mentally retarded offspring without "falling apart."

Although reliable research data on the specific functions that the mass media serve for working people audiences are sparse, it can be inferred from available studies that overall the mass media principally provide temporary psychological release and pleasure (entertainment), news, plus instrumental and supportive information of sorts to this sub-population.

On the matter of sporadic psychological release, Bogart offers the reading of newspaper "comics" among adult workers as one example.[4] In his study, the researcher interviewed 121 working status males in New York City in order to determine the gratifications they derived from reading newspaper comic strips. Among other things Bogart found that newspaper comic strips act to reduce tension in their readers mainly by "offering variety and a recurrent focus of interest." The author continues:

> Their (the 'comics') name implies that they also reduce tension through laughter. Actually, comic strip humor, simple and stereotyped as much of it is, seems to produce a grim, unsmiling kind of amusement for the most part. (p. 192)

Besides affording a minor degree of release to their working people readers newspaper comics also provide them superficial fantasy opportunities which the author found to be neither enduring nor psychologically damaging.

> The comics, concludes Bogart, do present their readers with fantasies of agression, sex, and achievement, and their appeal for particular groups of readers may be understood in these terms. But there is no evidence that the reader is drawn to these strips by a lust (either conscious or unconscious) for vicarious sensation; it seems rather that he brings his normal impulses to them as he does to other life experiences, and that the fantasies which they arouse, though based on these impulses, are brief and have a low emotional charge. (p. 198)

Coming home from a work day that generates and reenforces "muffled resentment" it is not difficult to see that workers crave temporary surcease. Commercial TV's entertainment offerings of programs like Bonanza, Hogan's Heroes, Mannix, Mission Impossible, Gunsmoke, Strange Report affords considerable opportunity for fanciful excursions into worlds that appear to be congruent with the value systems of the working man's own sub-culture. But note what is missing here. Nowhere in television entertainment fare--neither in commercial nor public TV--are working people to be seen as herioc role models. As a matter of fact the mass media's role models that are heroic in dimension are so indistinguishable by socio-economic status attributes that when explicitly identifiable working people become focal points for dramatic or comedic treatment they cause mild "sensations" in the society as a whole. In most recent times the swirlings of public commentary, debate, and controversy that engulfed the motion picture, Joe and the CBS television "situation comedy," All in the Family, are cases in point.

There is very little gratification to be derived by the working person attending either of these two particular entertainment offerings. For although in both instances blue-collar "heroes" (anti-heroes is more apt a description) appear they are presented as stereotyped, caricatured buffoons who are ignorant, bigoted, and socially loathesome for the most part. Generally speaking working people as such rarely appear in the mass media at all, and when they do they are cast in insignificant, peripheral, or socially unacceptable roles. Here too, then, the majority is neglected.

Given these circumstances worker audiences must make do with what media such as television and the movies decide to offer them in terms of role modeling. Gans has observed that it is practically impossible for working people to identify with middle or upper class hero types. Making do here means empathizing with a variety of "classless" types of mass media characters--the cowboy, the marshal, the armed services member, the policeman or detective, the high-performance athlete, the entertainer who is not yet a "star," and even the "criminal" who may have been "framed."

It would appear that Bogart's somewhat gross assertion that "the mass media represent perhaps the most powerful current by which blue-collar workers are swept into the main stream of conformity to middle class values and aspirations" [5](p. 407) is somewhat hyperbolic.

To the contrary it is more likely that working people approach the media quite selectively--embracing those characters, values, and life-styles that best fit in with their fixed needs, predispositions, and own experiences, while they either ignore or reject everything else that does not fit in. If anything the media appear to reenforce their working status patrons rather than either to convert or to "uplift" them into middle or upper status value systems and life styles.

Working people turn to television as well as to the other media for news in addition to entertainment.

In 1968 Roper Research Associates found that 59% of all the adults in America claimed that they got most of their news about "what's going on in the world today" from television.[29] To keep abreast of events as they occur is a need that most Americans (52%), <u>regardless of socio-economic status</u>, feel urgently in a time when their very survival depends on being informed on an up-to-the-minute basis.[23] This need is felt in particular by working people who, primarily because of lack of education, perceive themselves as being less informed about public affairs generally. On this score Mendelsohn reports that in his sample 31% of the persons with grammar school educations considered themselves to be relatively uninformed about world events as compared to 24% with a high school education and 13% with a college education who saw themselves in a similar light. At the same time this study revealed

that 62% of the sample who had but a grammar school education considered themselves as being forced to rely on others for ideas, opinions, and guidance on matters relating to a wide array of events as compared to 54% among those with a high school education and 42% with a college education who had the same self-perception.

Given the circumstances of a high level of concern for keeping up with the news combined with feelings relating to being ill-informed plus a felt need for reliance upon others for counsel and guidance, it is not surprising that television is a primary source of news for a substantial proportion of working people in the United States.

Needless to say television alone is not the only source of news for working people. Newspapers and radio play important roles here as well. The issue at hand is not one of simple exposure to news; but rather, the question arises as to the possible consequences of such exposure. We can only guess at this point because of the unavailability of solid research evidence on this matter.

Typically the working person who tunes in the nightly half hour TV net work news program is exposed to the same amount of "news" that appears daily on the front page of the New York Times. The capsulated bits of news that he sees rarely relate events that take place within the working person's sub-culture--unless of course they are concerned with work stoppages. Once again, the majority is a neglected one. Instead,

most of the TV news to which the working person is typically exposed is about the "outside world"--a world that is buffeted about by catastrophes both natural and man-made; by changes that reflect the break-up of traditional values; by political and economic upheavals; by demands for "rights" amont the youth and minorities; by crimes; by threats from alien ideologies. The miniscule information bits the working person viewing television news programs are exposed to are mostly descriptions of events, and rarely are they imbedded in analyses and interpretations of how these events are to be dealt with in terms of realistic consequences upon the viewer. Over time repeated exposure to threatening messages that are unaccompanied by interpretation and analysis cannot help but provoke feelings of intense anxiety and helplessness relative to controlling one's environment.

Elsewhere I have written:[19]

> From a socio-psychological point of view continued exposure to threatening messages that are unrelieved by interpretation or the possibility of enjoyment produces immobilization. That is to say individuals who are confronted with nothing but news of possible annihilation--which is the only 'realism' of consequence these days--over long periods of time will develop mechanisms of reaction that will render them incapable of functioning realistically. Free-floating anxiety under continued reenforcement results in attitudes of 'there's nothing I can do about it, so why bother.' (p. 515)

For working people who come to the news media with mental sets that expect the "outside world" to be menacing; who find it difficult to accept change and innovation as leading to "progress;" who are

oriented to the belief that the "theys" of the ouside world are responsible for the difficulties working people must endure, "straight" news in the very least must serve to reenforce pre-existing anxieties and to create new feelings of anxiety where they may not have existed.

Scammon and Wattenberg have postulated that the anxieties that are generated by working people's exposure to news about the disruptive changes that are taking place in the "outside world" have already had serious impacts on the political processes in this country and will continue to do so in the future, undoubtedly.[30] From analyses of a wide array of public opinion poll responses these authors have conjured up their now-famous picture of the significant American voter as being a, "forty-seven year-old housewife from the outskirts of Dayton, Ohio, whose husband is a machinist." They go on to profile her in this manner:

> She very likely has a somewhat different view of life and politics from that of a twenty-four-year-old instructor of political science at Yale. Now the young man from Yale may feel that he knows more about politics than the machinist's wife from suburban Dayton, and of course, in one sense he does. But he does not know much about politics or psychology, unless he understands what is bothering that lady in Dayton and unless he understands that her circumstances in large measure dictate her concerns.
>
> To know that the lady in Dayton is afraid to walk the streets alone at night, to know that she has a mixed view about blacks and civil rights because before moving to the suburbs she lived in a neighborhood that became all black, to know that her brother-in-law is a policeman, to know that she does not have the money to move if her new neighborhood deteriorates, to know that she is deeply distressed that her son is going to a community junior college where LSD was found on the campus--to know all this is the beginning of contemporary political wisdom. (pp. 70-71)

"To know all this..." may not necessarily lead to the amelioration of working people's fears and concerns. The evidence seems to indicate that this knowledge has been used more to exploit rather than to enlighten working status voters, if the most recent political campaigns of 1968 and 1970 are to be taken as cases in point.

If the mass media in a democracy are supposed to produce an informed electorate which votes in terms of the common good, both the intentional and unintentional uses to which the media were put in the 1968 and 1970 political campaigns indicate that this trust along with the voters of the nation suffered from neglect. Consequently, the working segments of the American electorate (comprising the largest single bloc of eligible voters by a margin of 45%) remained not only objects of neglect; but worse still, they were turned into objects of powerful propagandistic-political manipulation.

"To know" the working status voter should not become the basis for a manual on how to jockey him into one or another political camp. Ideally, knowledge of the workingman's sub-culture should be used by the media in order to <u>enlighten</u> him politically. Thus far the media, especially both commercial and public television, have failed to address themselves positively to this responsibility. This failure affords cable communications systems an opportunity which, if fulfilled, can have the most serious consequences imaginable upon the future quality of life in America.

We have noted that there is a tendency among working people to feel less-well informed about public affairs and to be more dependent upon others for non-news related ideas, advice, and guidance. To a degree this syndrome reflects the generally lower educational achievement levels of working people. At the same time it reflects a more profound psychological state of personal insecurity in a threatening world and a diminished level of self-esteem. To the person who is unsure of himself and, simultaneously, who is wary of the abstract, obtuse mouthings of "egg-head" authorities, television affords an easy-to grasp, non-confusing and convenient "school of life." Consequently, as previously reported, we find that fully a fifth of working status viewers report that they depend "a lot" upon television for instrumental information which, for the most part "teaches" them about matters relating to dress, manners, courtship, romance, coping with personal crises and tragedy, health, child-rearing, etiquette, the law and so on. As the lady in the pain-reliever commercial says, "You watch TV--you learn something."

What must be borne in mind is that most of the fare to be found on commercial television is not intentionally created for the specific purpose of presenting instrumental information per se to working status audiences. In this regard again the requisites of the majority are woefully neglected. In constant need of being able to cope with a

wide range of everyday practical problems, the working status viewer actively attempts to sluice out for himself or herself whatever small nuggets of subjectively-defined "useful" information may be buried in the fare that is being offered. Thus, "education" of an incidental nature does take place via TV, but it is not as easily to be identified as is education without the quotation marks. Instead of being cognitive in nature it is usually affective. Rather than being concerned with ideas and things it is mostly concerned with people; rather than being abstract in its long-range thrust it is highly pragmatic in its immediate applicability.

Although the Bible warns us that, "Without knowledge the people shall perish," it has become evident that modern man cannot survive with cognitive (i.e. abstract) information alone. In addition to "knowing" something about the universe in abstract terms, modern man must also have instrumental information that enables him to get along in society with some degree of facility. He also requires another type of information that is basically supportive in nature--information that helps him find and fulfill himself as a human being who is worthy of respect, dignity, and societal concern and who has the ability to cope with the vicissitudes of life.

Although contemporary television attempts to offer fare that may somehow fill some of the cognitive, instrumental, and supportive

information needs of some of its audiences, it does so haphazardly, obliquely, irregularly and, it would appear, without either knowledge of or special regard for the particular needs of its working status majority audience. This is not meant to be an across-the-board "indictment" of television. Whether contemporary TV is "good" or "bad" or neither is not at issue for the purposes of this paper. What is at issue is the presence of a majority population whose information needs appear to be inadequately served by television. What, if anything, can (or should) cable communications do about this?

Towards a Neglect Undone

The technology of cable communications makes it quite feasible to create a service capable of reaching America's working status majority either as one national sub-population or as segments of that major sub-population that share commonalities of specific occupational pursuits or locales or combinations of the two. The technological problems involved in forming more explicit linkages between TV and working people via cable will not be dealt with here. We shall assume that the possibilities for creating a cable TV network (or networks) designed to carry relevant cognitive, instrumental, and supportive information to working status homes are realistic. Putting aside important matters relating to technology, structure, administration, and financing of such a system, two very important questions remain; namely, who is going to operate and sustain the system, and what will the contents of its fare be? In actuality these two considerations should not be separated, for each is a direct function of the other.

No communications system that proposes to address itself to the working status public will be enabled to do so unless it is manned and sustained by persons of ostensible working status backgrounds and interests. In order to build credibility and ultimate acceptance among working status audiences the proposed system would of necessity have to be manned by visible working-status general managers,

program managers, writers, newscasters, performers, directors and producers. Unless the communications system that is envisaged is of the working sub-culture throughout, it cannot purport to be for it.

In addition to establishing both legitimacy and authenticity, a number of obvious advantages flow from creating a communications system for working people from among the working sub-culture itself.

First off, the very emergence of a special working status communications system which is manned by persons from that sub-culture would offer evidence of the genuine and serious concern that the so-called outside world has for working people. Additionally, it would demonstrate that the outside world respects the capabilities of working people to operate their own communications systems without the constant support, direction, and aid of the middle and upper class community.

Secondly, the "Neglected Majority" would begin to have a potentially powerful voice of its own--a voice for all to hear. Here the community at large would begin to become acquainted with the needs, grievances, and problems that are experienced by working status people. Thus, a process wherein working people start to tie-in more intimately with the rest of the community and vice versa can begin with the sheer existence of a working status communications system.

Third, the simple existence of such a system should in itself serve as an alternative career opportunity model to working people who feel themselves to be predestined to follow in the traditional footsteps of their fathers.

Currently the essential "visible" personnel manning the television industry are not typically drawn from the working sub-culture; and the few who come from such backgrounds quickly shed them. It would be imperative then to recruit and train members of the working sub-culture not only to man the proposed system but to supply the mass media enterprises as a whole with well-qualified personnel who are proficient in the various mass communications techniques and processes. Initially cadres of working status personnel may have to be trained in such non-working status milieux as college and universities and in commercial and non-commercial television outlets. Eventually, though, once the working sub-culture cable communications systems (W.S.C.C.S's for short) come into their own. Such training functions would themselves become integral operations within the W.S.C.C.S's.

Let us suppose that we have overcome the problems inherent in building up a W.S.C.C.S.--what then? In order to answer this question in at least a partial way we must return to our previous discussions once again.

In some respects the W.S.C.C.S. can be seen as supplementing the more commonplace media, while in others, it may be viewed as a completely independent system. Regardless of relative independence, the W.S.C.C.S. can be viewed as an information service that can afford viewers unique informational sub-types that are explicitly cognitive, instrumental, and supportive in nature. Although these informational sub-types will be discussed individually for purposes of clarity, the reader must keep in mind that operationally there exists considerable overlap and interdependence among and between them.

In offering working people cognitive, instrumental, and supportive information a W.S.C.C.S. would do well first to consider adopting overall long-range strategic communications objectives from within which shorter-term tactical ends can be pursued.

In terms of long-range goals the proposed system might address itself to accomplishing seven objectives.

First, there is an ostensible need among working people to become aware of the "outside world" as a non-menacing place into which they fit as essential and recognizable contributors rather than as mere pawns in a large social, economic, and politically manipulating game whose rules are rigged on behalf of the upper and middle classes.

Secondly, working people must be guided to emerge from their tendencies to cling to their psychologically comfortable but socially

stalemated peer-centered tradition-bound narrow social environments. They must learn that if they are to better themselves and their children, thereby achieving a relatively higher degree of "happiness," they must first participate more energetically in the larger community. Alone, in quasi-isolation from the greater society in which they live, they can accomplish little in the way of improving their social and economic and political lot. But in concert with others drawn from the larger community they have the potentiality of wielding tremendous power.

Third, they must acquire a deeper understanding of the functioning (and dysfunctioning) of social institutions so that they can approach institutions and authority realistically without fear and with some hope of achieving success. At the same time they ought to be given a better working knowledge of the interplay that goes on between institutions and people in order that they may acquire a higher degree of sophistication in making institutions more sensitive and responsive to human needs.

Fourth, working people should be made to realize that the many ills of society which constantly assert themselves into consciousness are not so much due to the failings of "evil" people per se, but instead are consequences of more remote institutional breakdowns, long-term social processes, misguided public policies, and inept social decision-making. The remedies for such ills lie not in the

punishment of individuals but in the orderly restructuring of social institutions and changes in public policy through legitimate political processes.

Fifth, workers must be instructed in the dynamics of change so that they can understand, evaluate, and begin to adapt to those changes that may be of social merit and resist those that may not. Living in an age of unrelenting and inevitable changes of all sorts, sheer resistance to all innovations simply because they are new results in the discomforture that Alvin Toffler labels as "future shock." How to cope with future shock may be an informational thrust that will be directed to the entire population eventually. For the working status sub-groups in our society such information is long overdue, and is absolutely essential at this time.

Sixth, because politicians are re-discovering the so-called Silent, Middle, or Real Majority--or what have you--it becomes vital for working people in America to begin to build up greater immunity against demagogues of all stripes who seek to exploit working people's anxieties for their own narrow, selfish political ends.

Seventh, the proposed W.S.C.C.S. might well address itself to the provision of simple pleasure-giving entertainment that is better geared to the unique popular culture taste levels of working people.

Perhaps the most difficult task that can confront an educator or communicator is to transmit cognitive information (i. e. knowledge) to individuals who are neither prepared nor motivated to receive it. Typically we resort to the classroom method of "teaching" when we face this problem. But we must realize that the working status individual's very need for cognitive information is, to a high degree, a very consequence of his having been "turned off" by formalized classroom teaching in the past. Consequently, if a W.S.C.C.S. is to transmit cognitive information the greatest degree of creative ingenuity in devising new approaches is called for.

Without considerable experimentation with new modes of treatment it is impossible to say how cognitive information of an abstract kind can best be communicated to worker viewers. We can only guess that stereotyped chalk/board presentations, discussion panels of experts, and learned lectures will not do the trick. "Multi-media" devices, dramatizations, and animation types of presentations hold out some promise here. Regardless of how skilled we may become in the presentation of purely cognitive informational materials we shall always have to cope with the factor of low motivation. Working people generally are not active cognitive information-seekers for many reasons that have been discussed previously. If we wish working people to attend to cognitive information we must first motivate them to do so. Here the possibility

of providing financial "scholarships" for attending cable transmitted "courses" comes to mind. Another idea worth exploring is to "pipe in" materials that are designed to enhance job skills to places of work during regular working hours. Workers attending these "training" sessions could be given released time and perhaps even small "bonuses" for doing so.

The anti-intellectual bent of working people represents another barrier. Somehow this sub-population must be convinced of the pragmatic potentials of abstract ideas and information. Whether a W.S.C.C.S. by itself can get this notion across effectively is questionable, but it should give it a good try nonetheless.

The cognitive information thrust of a W.S.C.C.S. should be tri-directional. First, it should be oriented to the enhancement of job and career skills. Second, it should be addressed more to generating usable knowledge about the changing social world than about the physical or artistic world. Third, it should offer worker viewers news and information from their own perspectives about the special "world" with which they are most intimately familiar--that of the working sub-culture. Here a W.S.C.C.S. news operation would serve as a supplement to the ordinary news fare that is presented by television.

We would expect that these supplemental news services would attempt to explain the reasons behind the emergence of issues and events for working people; the possible consequences of these issues and events upon working people as well as upon the total society; and most importantly, to point out explicit alternative possibilites for reasonable reactions to issues and events. In sum news analyses and interpretations by a W.S.C.C.S. should be concerned mainly with the development of rational response modes among viewers, and in doing so they should be extra cautious about the possibilities of fostering non-rationale boomerang response modes of fear, anxiety, and violent reaction.

Finally, a responsible W.S.C.C.S. should avoid creating viewer dependency upon it alone for cognitive information (as well as for other types of information). Here, the W.S.C.C.S. should serve as a stimulant for viewers to explore the widest possible array of information sources beyond the system itself. In this respect the W.S.C.C.S. should serve as the broadest-scaled vehicle of social education regarded in its widest context.

In order to accomplish this end the proposed system cannot rest in its singular function of merely providing cognitive information per se. What to do with such information? How to relate this information to actions of consequence? How to use information to realize

aspirations to redress legitimate grievances and to achieve improvements in the conditions of life generally? These questions require a considerable dedication on the part of a W.S.C.C.S. to direct much energy in developing instrumental information that is tailored to the guidance needs of its special audiences.

We have noted that "getting by" is a dominant concern of working people. On the most simplistic level, then, working persons need the most commonplace types of day-to-day "coping" information that will help them hold on to their jobs, survive when unemployed, make prudent purchases, avoid getting cheated, conduct themselves properly in job-interviews, diagnose simple illnesses, prepare cheap appetizing meals, plan inexpensive vacations, make bank loans--and so on. Here the need is for a good deal of "how to" information that is not as "glamorous" as strictly cognitive knowledge; but nevertheless, as important, if not more so.

On a more subtle plane we can envisage an instrumental information need that perhaps cannot be articulated readily by working people themselves. Here we can speculate that working people who have not linked up with the larger society may not know much about how such a linkage might be accomplished. How does one become part of the "outside world" which, although it controls one's life appears to be relatively unresponsive to one's overtures? Certainly, a W.S.C.C.S. can present models for accomplishing this kind of

hook-up. The model that comes to mind first is concerned with voluntary organizations. No doubt additional models will present themselves as the reader continues.

One of the most effective means for individuals in a complex, pluralistic, open society such as ours to overcome their individual senses of social, economic, and political helplessness and powerlessness is to combine forces with others in various networks of interrelationship. Creating or joining voluntary organizations is one means for accomplishing this. There are additional important functions that membership in voluntary associations serves as Murray Hausknecht reminds us:[16]

> In a modern, large-scale, democratic society, voluntary associations are means for furthering the political and economic interests of individuals. This implies that political effectiveness demands that the individual participate in the political processes as a member of an organization. His organizational membership, therefore, serves the further function of helping him transcend his routinized day-to-day activities on the job and in the family by establishing linkages with the broader community and society. By mediating between the individual and the state, associations protect the individual from the unrestrained exercise of power and, by the same token, serve to protect the 'elites' who control and exercise this power. (p. 207)

Yet, the fact is, as numerous observers of the worker subculture have ascertained, that workers are far less prone than are upper status people to join voluntary associations. Note the figures in Table 8.

Table 8. Membership in Voluntary Associations by Occupation

| Occupation | Per Cent Who Belong To: None | One | Two or More | Total | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Professional | 47% | 24% | 29% | 100% | (259) |
| Proprietors, Managers, Officials | 47 | 24 | 29 | 100 | (294) |
| Farm Owners | 58 | 28 | 14 | 100 | (265) |
| Clerical and Sales | 59 | 21 | 20 | 100 | (240) |
| Skilled Labor | 68 | 19 | 13 | 100 | (447) |
| Semiskilled Labor | 77 | 14 | 9 | 100 | (492) |
| Service | 73 | 18 | 9 | 100 | (142) |
| Nonfarm Labor | 79 | 16 | 5 | 100 | (155) |
| Farm Labor | 87 | 13 | 0 | 100 | (54) |
| Retired, Unemployed | 77 | 11 | 12 | 100 | (35) |

Source: National Opinion Research Center, Survey 367, 1955.

By now the reader should be able to figure out for himself why workers are less likely to become involved with voluntary organizations. We have seen that the focal points of the working man's world are mainly the traditional primary peer group types of the family circle, a few close friends, and his neighborhood. The secondary relationships that a complex business/technological society demands are given but a nodding acknowledgement on the part of the worker. To him this aspect of society represents the "outside world" which generally is viewed with anxiety, suspicion, awkwardness, discomfort, and hostility. Venturing into this alien environment--even via voluntary associations--represents a journey into unfamiliar territory--territory that harbors

unknown dangers and which threatens to break up routine modes of response (mostly avoidance). Additionally the "connection" between belonging to voluntary organizations and "making things happen" is not readily seen by most working people.

Hausknecht sums up:

> An association brings together individuals who are strangers to one another in more or less impersonal, secondary relationships; their common bond is a specific interest. This requires of the individual a capacity to inhibit suspicion and hostility toward others, and maintaining this attitude represents a severe strain on the tolerance of blue-collar persons. If the sphere in which the association is active is highly complex, for example, influencing the local power structure, there is a tendency for the organization to become bureaucratic, and for impersonal social relationships to become the dominant mode. In any organization it is possible to establish primary relationships; indeed, this opportunity represents one of the main functions of associations. However, the more 'formal' the organization becomes, the more irrelevant do these primary relationships become; the 'businesslike' atmosphere of the pragmatic and efficient organization does not nourish primary relations. Once an organization takes on this cast, it creates a difficult situation for the blue-collar individual oriented to the kind of interaction found in the family and the peer group. (p. 208)

> ...An association of citizens is a means of effective political participation, a means of influencing the decisions affecting one's life. The inability of the working class to use this instrument cripples its capacity for coping with the environment and seizing the opportunities it offers. (p. 214)

A W.S.C.C.S. can go a long way in pointing up the necessity for working people to combine with others in pursuing common social goals by demonstrating how such concerted action benefits other subgroups in the society; by showing how to start voluntary organizations

and how to run them; by pointing out existing organizations in the community which would welcome the participation of viewers; and by itself becoming a focal point for a voluntary organization that addresses itself mainly to the problems and needs of working people.

A direct offshoot from a policy of stimulating greater societal participation by workers through the vehicle of voluntary organizations would be an enlarged participation in the political process generally.

Table 9 shows that eligible voters in the lower income brackets (i.e. working people) are less likely to vote than are more affluent eligible voters by substantial margins.

Table 9. Voter Participation by Income, 1968

| Annual Family Income | Per Cent of Eligible Voters Who Actually Voted |
|---|---|
| Under $3,000 | 54 |
| $3,000-$4,999 | 58 |
| $5,000-$15,000 | 72 |
| $15,000 and over | 84 |
| Total Per Cent Votes Cast by Eligible Voters in 1968 as reported by the Census Bureau in Voting and Registration in the Election of November, 1968. | 67.8% |

Motivating working people to participate in the voting process in far greater numbers than they have been accustomed to in the past is another important mission in the overall linking-up thrust that a W.S.C.C.S. might adopt.

The W.S.C.C.S.'s general efforts in stimulating greater broad societal participation among workers by providing them with instrumental information faces an additional problem. It has been noted over and over again that working people for the most part fail to see direct connections between education and intellectualism and improvement in their own lives. Somehow a better linking model--other than holding up the outright adoption of middle and upper class educational-success values--must be forged. Precisely how to do this is unclear at the moment. But it is a problem which merits considerable attention and study if the W.S.C.C.S. is to become an effective specialized communications medium.

For the most part most of what the mass media present most of the the time is supportive of middle and upper class values, beliefs, interests, and tastes. Even when the media present issues and events that may appear to be of a counter nature, the same media offer reassurance that these disruptive challenges and threats can be met and overcome through the application of reason, dialogue, fair-play, logic, enhanced communication, and new forms of public policy. Generally,

the middle and upper class patron of the mass media is reassured of the enduring stability of his institutional systems to the point that he believes firmly in his own ability to "work through the systems" in order to maintain his sense of equilibrium. Because he is better-educated and because he is convinced that "reasonable" change often does lead to "progress," the middle and upper class media patron is less tradition-bound and he shows far less intransigence when confronted with change than does his working status counterpart. To a degree upper and middle class individuals are better prepared to live in a changing world, because their stake in it is visibly more deeply imbedded and more secure. They hold the power, and the media assure them that they will continue to do so by right. In other words the mass media in America are generally supportive of the middle and upper classes, holding them up as examples of the norms by which all other segments of our society are to measure themselves and by which all others are to be judged.

But what of the working status patron of the mass media? As far as he is concerned with rare exceptions he is the media's "invisible man". The fact that he is literally an absent phenomenon within the media undoubtedly convinces him that in the general scheme of things he is not important, not worthy of attention, not to be concerned about. In other words where the mass media reenforce the

"superior" status of the middle and upper classes, they serve to reenforce feelings of diminished self-esteem among working people. A working sub-culture cable communications system can go along way in balancing out this inversion.

As previously stated such a system by its very existence would provide positive feelings of worth and self-esteem to working status viewers. Additionally explicitly designed programming that has a distinctive authentic working status flavor about it would offer substantial psychological support to viewers. In particular, dramas which reflect working status themes and which project authentic heroes drawn from the working sub-culture should serve to enhance viewers self evaluations towards more positive feelings of worth in a general way. At the same time programming fare that is drawn from the working sub-culture and which projects authentic working status heroes, values, beliefs, themes, and tastes could address itself realistically to the actual anxieties, fears, and worries that bedevil working people in an attempt to ameliorate them somewhat. Of course mass communications messages by themselves cannot do away with these symptoms of malaise. They can, if prepared conscientiously, ease them to a degree by offering remedially-oriented analogs through first presenting these conditions as not comprising unique or odd individualized experiences that are to be endured in isolation and second,

through demonstrating different techniques for coping with anxieties by recognizing their sources and dynamics. At present working people must scrounge around in the media in order to find this kind of supportive material, which more often than not, turns out to be be of meretricious quality. This circumstance can be remedied greatly by a W.S.C.C.S. that dedicates itself to presenting expertly conceived and professionally implemented explicit supportive programming.

Specialized supportive information designed to dull the edges of suspiciousness, distrust, boredom and fear that are exhibited by the youth, adult men and women, and older persons comprising the working sub-culture can be seen as charges to which a specialized W.S.C.C.S. can address itself with some confidence in making a significant contribution. Here it must be remembered that the sense of helplessness and despair that is experienced by working persons is based mostly in reality. They are not to be considered as being clinically "neurotic" and amenable only to psychotherapy. What a specially designed W.S.C.C.S. can accomplsih in this regard minimally is to bring these feelings up into the open levels of consciousness and then to offer possible means for resolving them on the same plane.

If we can envisage the development of a specialized working status cable communications system we can readily see that its

fundamental task is undoing the neglect that working people in America have endured at the hands of our more common mass communications media. In order to remedy this neglect, the proposed alternative system can make itself effective only by allowing itself to be guided by the realities of workers' needs, values, tastes, and styles of life. To neglect these realities is to add to the neglect of the constituencies that the proposed system might be able to serve.

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